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VERSES OF THIRTY YEARS AGO

REV. MICHAEL V. M'DONOUGH

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VERSES

of

THIRTY YEARS AGO

BY

REV. MICHAEL V. McDONOUGH

AUTHOR OF

"ONE YEAR WITH GOD"

ANGEL GUARDIAN PRESS, JAMAICA PLAIN
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Boston
1917

CONTENTS.

I. My Rosary 11
II. Resignation 12
III. Spirit Rest! 13
IV. The Year of Time 14
V. Fanny Parnell 15
VI. Nature's Music 17
VII. Profession:—
1. Question 19
2. Answer 21
3. Bitte Fur Mich! . . . 23
VIII. Faith Looks Through Death . 24
IX. Alone 26
X. Sonnet 27
XI. Greeting 28
XII. Loneliness 30
Note to "Loneliness" . . . 31
XIII. Four Hymns to St. Anne:—ë
1. Morning star 32
2. The Holy Name, Saint Anne 33
3. Recourse To Saint Anne . 34
4. Hymn to Saint Anne . . 35
XIV. St. Bernard's Mother . . . 36
XV. The Pagan Philosopher's Question 38
XVI. The Pagan Philosopher's Answer 40

CONTENTS

XVII. Old St. Mary's 44
XVIII. Farewell 47
XIX. At Corpus Christi 50
XX. Life and Death 52
XXI. Fidelity 54
XXII. Beauty in All Things . . . 56
XXIII. Day-Dream 58
XXIV. Fourth of July in Tyrol . . 61
XXV. The Light-House 63
XXVI. New Year's Eve 65
XXVII. Memorial Day 66
XXVIII. Nationhood 69
XXIX. At Seventy-Four 72
XXX. Garfield 73
XXXI. The Rose of Friendship . . . 75
XXXII. To a College Friend's Mother . 76
XXXIII. On a Fly-Leaf 77
XXXIV. In the Dormitory 78
XXXV. The Tramp 80
XXXVI. To My Canary 81
XXXVII. To Walter 83
XXXVIII. Base-Ball Song 85
XXXIX. The Melodies of Ireland . . 88

DEDICATORY VERSES.

Brothers of Charity, yours are the verses here,
Take them or leave them, admire or disdain!
Little of moment the rhymester rehearses here;
Would it were much! For his spirit would fain
Prove you its gratitude, pay what it owes to you,
Sons of the Belgian Vincent de Paul*
Rich in the kindness and grace that e'er flows to you
Down from the Maker and Master of all!

Workers in silence for Christ and His dearest ones,
Love is your portion here, glory above.
Many profess; but the true and sincerest ones
Sacrifice, suffer and live for their love.
Thus speed your lives away: faith, regularity,—
Self all forgotten,—like drops in the sea,—
God be your guerdon, ye Brothers of Charity,
Christ your rewarder and heaven your fee!

*See Note to Dedicatory Verses, next page.

NOTE TO DEDICATORY VERSES

The Very Rev. Pierre Joeph Triest (1760–1836), Titular Canon of St. Bavon of Ghent, Knight of the Order of Leopold and of the Order of the Belgian Lion, Founder of the Brothers of Charity. In history, and even during his life-time ,he has often been called "the St. Vincent dePaul of Belgium."

PREFACE.

The title-page describes this volume very well; not "poems," please, but "verses." For "poetry" and "poem" have always been, to the author at least, words of a character almost sacred. He would grant the title "poetry" only to the very best passages of the great classics, ancient and modern, though there is much unworded poetry in the earth-life-experience of every human being.

Nearly all of these "verses of thirty years ago" were published in newspapers and magazines of about that period under various nom-de-plumes. The author collects them now for the first time in a volume. He considers them "too good to throw away" and hopes that many readers will find pleasure in them.

Jan. 18th., 1917.
St. Kilian's Church,
New Bedford,
Mass.

I.

MY ROSARY.

O Mother, list my heartfelt prayer,
The prayer I offer Thine and thee!
O hear and answer by thy loving care
My rosary, my rosary!
I hail thee oft, and to thee send
The homage of my heart and tongue.
I tell each bead, "each bead unto the end;
And there a cross is hung."
O help me, tho' life's shadows frown,
In joy and woe, in gain and loss,
To thank thy Son Divine for every crown;
To kiss each cross, Mother, to kiss each cross!

Hail Mary! Full of grace art thou.
O bend thy smile of love on me,
That e'er thro' life I tell to thee, as now,
My rosary, my rosary!
Thy joys and sorrows sweetly blend
In that great glory thou hast won.
The Lord is with thee, Mother; be my friend
With thy Almighty Son;
That so life's beads of sorrow form
With every joyful mystery
My glorious decades, when I'm past the storm,—
In heaven with thee, Mother, in heaven with thee!

II.

RESIGNATION.

He was my friend, as fair to see
As human kind are wont to be;
And Thou didst take him, Lord, from me:
Thy Will be done.

I had none other. He alone
Remained awhile. Now he hath flown,
My life is sad. My heart doth moan:
"Thy Will be done."

Perchance 'tis best life's cloudy day
Should quickly from him pass away.
I trust he's happy, while I pray:
"Thy Will be done."

Forgive, O Lord, the wilful tear
That comes from nature, not from fear.
I trust and pray. And Thou wilt hear.
Thy Will be done.

I bow my soul beneath Thy rod,
Though tears may fall upon the sod
Above his body. Oh! my God,
Thy Will be done.

III.

SPIRIT, REST!

Rest thee, spirit, from our vision
By death's fingers torn away!
In the glow of light elysian
Mayst thou find a brighter day!
Not in outward semblance only
Is our prayer to God addressed,
But from hearts grown sad and lonely.
Spirit, rest!

Rest thee, spirit! Strife is ended,
Battle over, labour done,
All earth's crosses grandly blended
In the crown which thou hast won.
Where no sorrow can confound thee
Thou has flown at God's behest.
Saints and angels are around thee,
Spirit, rest!

IV.

THE YEAR OF TIME.

Three seasons are there in the Year of Time
And only three. They spread their Kingdom vast
From end to end thro' all; and each is famed
For manifold attractions. They are named
The Present and the Future and the Past.
Not by the changing charms of cold and heat,
Not by the flowers and hoar-frost are they known.
The Present's joys and sorrows e'er retreat.
The Future, while we grasp it, shall be flown.
And memories, which with us ever last,
Are living blossoms of the buried Past.

The Year of Time, O, 'tis a wondrous year!
Creation's dawning was the New-Year's Day,
And age on age have seen it onward wend
Its calm, continued course unto the end
Where earth and skies at last shall pass away.
Before and after it eternity.
Whence God's unerring Voice its judgment speaks.
Within it all that was and is to be;
Ages its days; millenia its weeks;
And, be they in the green leaf or the sear,
The lives of men but minutes of that Year.

V.

FANNY PARNELL.

When dies the patriot, a nation weeps
  In tender gratitude above his grave.
She consecrates the spot wherein he sleeps;
  She guards forever all the love he gave;
Forgetfulness shall ne'er o'erwhelm the name
So close inwoven in its country's fame.
No; high enthroned o'er pets of time or place,
Admired by all men, worshipped by his race,
  In envied glory he shall ever shine.
O Woman, lovely thro' thy selfless love
For native land, ascend thy throne above;
  Depart in peace. The patriot's crown is
    thine.

When cruel death doth steal the poet's soul
  And still fore'er his passion-breathing lyre,
His melodies along the ages roll
  To light in other hearts his own bright fire
Tho' green grass groweth and sad ivy creepeth
Above the charnel where his body sleepeth.
O Woman, burning with the poet's flame,
Thy Land's delight shall vivify thy name,
  Thy Land shall e'er thy memory enshrine.
Earth's days are done for thee; thy bird-songs
    cease.
Fair Bard of Erin, take thy flight in peace.
  The singer's immortality is thine.

O loving daughter of a grateful land,
O daughter true, as e'er thy land hath borne,
O woman by thy noble labours grand,
Thy web is spun; thy woof of life is torn;
Thy clarion battle-voice no longer charms;
The present yields thee to the future's arms.
Yet sons and daughters of another age
Shall read thy name on history's shining page
In characters that time can ne'er efface,
And in her patriot-children's gallant line,
O Patriot-Poet, thou shalt brightly shine
When 'mid the nations Erin takes her place.

VI.

NATURE'S MUSIC.

The thirsty flowers are drinking
  The gentle rain of spring
And sweetly on their petals
  It soundeth, pattering;—
Glad music of the springtime,
  Swell out, and fill with cheer
The heart that welcomes gladly
  The boyhood of the year!

The sun is brightly shining
  While summer breezes blow
And softly from the meadows
  The drowsy cattle low.—
Sweet melodies of summer,
  Breathe low your slumbrous strain.
The days when rest is over,
  Too soon will dawn again.

The faded leaves are rustling
  Upon the withered grass
While, fleeing from the Winter,
  The days of Autumn pass.
The zephyrs, gently sighing,
  Proclaim with bated breath
The hour of winter's advent,
  The hour of nature's death.

Upon earth's wrinkled bosom
The frozen snow-drifts lie
And icy stars are twinkling
From out the cold, blue sky.—
Howl loud, ye winds of winter,
A requiem shrill and clear;
Ye publish to the nations
The death-bed of the year.

All these are nature's music.
O it is far more sweet
Than e'er from earth's composers
Our wond'ring ears shall greet.
The symphonies of nature
Have come to us from God!—
Less glorious the pathway
Brahms' and Beethoven's trod.

VII.

PROFESSION.

(The first part, "Question," by Sister St. Andrew of the Montreal Grey Nuns; only the other two parts, "Answer" and "Bitte Für Mich," by the author).

1. QUESTION.

"Sister of Charity.
Robed in grey,
Did thy heart grow sad
When thou spokst today?

"Did dreams of earth's pleasure
Come between,
Thy soul from the cross
Of thy Spouse to wean?

"Did far-off joys seem as
Burnished gold?
Thy ring and thy cross
As a weight untold?

"O, no! For thy heart roamed
Far away
From this glittering world
And its pageants gay.

"O, no! O, no! For all
Earthly dross
Thou countest naught
In the light of the cross.

"Thou'st freely chosen the
Better part;
Thy Master and Spouse
Claims thy willing heart.

"Ah! Angels lowered their
Light-crowned brows
To listen today
To thy holy vows.

"And Mary smiled from her
Throne above.
And the Heart of thy
Master thrilled with love!

"Sister of Charity,
Robed in grey,
'Mid the sick and the poor
Is thy lowly way.

"Thou'st taken the path
That leads to God;
Thou'rt tracing the steps
Which thy Saviour trod.

"May the field of thy soul be
Bright in bloom,
When His loving Voice
Bids thee hasten home!"

2. ANSWER.

Sister of Charity,
Robed in grey,
My soul was light
When I spoke today.

No dream of earth and its
Fleeting dross
Held back my heart
From my Saviour's cross.

No worldly vision
Came between
My soul and the joys
Eye hath not seen.

For the perfect peace
What tongue may say
Of the Sister of Charity,
Robed in grey?

The worldling strives for
Fickle gold;
And the joys of his heart
Tongues oft have told.

He searcheth for pleasure
O'er sea and land;
He graspeth each world-joy
With eager hand;

All the days of his life
After baubles flee;
And the treasures he findeth
Each eye may see.

But eye cannot see, be it
Sharp as steel,
Nor ear e'er hear,
Nor spirit feel,

Nor mind conceive,
Nor tongue e'er say
The Heaven-On-Earth of the
Nun in grey!

When my path was over
Earth's stony soil,
It was Mary's Son
Who eased my toil.

I sought the home
Where frail earth-joys cease.
I entered in
And I found but peace.

When my weary feet to the
Altar had paced,
'Twas the King of Heaven
That I embraced.

With a prayer for strength
I knelt me down;
I clasped the cross, and it
Seemed a crown!

My soul was faint
And my heart was wan;
'Twas the Lord of life
That I leaned upon!

Sister of Charity,
Robed in grey,
My heart was light
When I spoke today.

---

3. BITTE FUR MICH.

O Oft thro' this life's
Short, stormy day,
'Mid the sick and the poor
Of your peaceful way,

For a feeble
Brother in pity pray,
Kind Sister of Charity,
Robed in grey!

VIII.

FAITH LOOKS THROUGH DEATH.

"*In the faith that looks through death*"—(*Wordsworth.*)

(*The Rev. Daniel F. Holland died in* 1884, *and only a few months after having taken his vow as a subdeacon.*)

Thus stilled fore'er the busy brain
By cruel death's resistless dart;
Thus chilled the throbbing, love-warm heart,
So gentle to a brother's pain;
Thus calmed as in a magic spell
The veins whose pulsing life is o'er;
Thus from our presence gone before,
Our brother, whom we loved so well!

Faith looks through death and peers beyond
The sable portals of the tomb,
And lo! bright light from out the gloom
And far-off voices that respond
To her full questionings, unsealed
Before her gaze the mystery;
The spirit's immortality
In all its brightness clear revealed.

Ah! Loved One, what a change is thine!
That earth, with pain and pleasure rife,
Should fade from thee, that love and life
Within thine eyes should cease to shine,
That vanished is the manful will,
That every function doth forget
To play its wonted part. And yet
Faith looks through death, and sees thee still.

Faith looks through death. And tho' thine eyes
Have closed unto our earthly light,
We know thou hast a keener sight
Where dwells thy soul in Paradise;
And tho' on earth's maternal breast
Full lowly lies thy placid brow,
'Tis well. The sacramental vow
Shall crown thee in thy spirit's rest.

O short-lived melody that thrilled
Our spirits for one fleeting hour!
Sweet, fragrant, early-blighted flower
Of earthly promise unfulfilled,
Beyond the grave, hope whispereth,
In heaven, shall thy blooming be;—
But on the cold, dark earth stand we.
And evermore faith looks through death.

IX.

ALONE.

I sit here, where so oft I've sat with thee;
I watch the setting sun
Sink grandly down beyond the purpled sea;
The wavelets still roll on,
And birds still twitter in the apple-tree;
But thou art gone.

O fairer than this golden summer day
And bright as yonder sphere,
Thy young soul took its flight from earth away!
No more shalt thou appear
To soothe my grief. What homage may I pay,
Save prayer and tear?

X.

SONNET.

(*Mother Angela—nee Ewing—died on a Friday at* 11 *a. m., March 4th*, 1887.)

On Friday, one brief hour before the noon,
The lowly Nazarene, with thorn-crowned Head,
Wan, weak, blood-bruised by cruel blows, was led
From Pilate's halls to Calvary: eftsoon
The Lord was crucified. For that rich Boon,
The Life He gave us, countless saints have shed
Warm, grateful tears, and countless lives have sped
In sacrifice:—such, not inopportune,
The life thou gavest to Christ's sacred cause,
Sweet Mother Angela, whose saintly tread,
Obedient as the sea-tides to the moon,
Sought God thro' life, nor swerved from Heaven's laws.—
Angels were near when thy bright spirit fled
On Friday, one brief hour before the noon.

XI.

GREETING.

To Fr. Brady, S. J., Provincial.

(Holy Cross, 1881.)

We gather here within the college hall
With happy hearts and faces free from sorrow.
Without, the thick'ning shades of evening fall
Like lonely sprites that vainly seek to borrow
From earth its cheerfulness. We feel no loss.
A beaming presence maketh glad our meeting.
We hail tonight a friend of Holy Cross
And welcome him. Provincial, hear our greeting!

We've waited long thy coming. Happy hours
Have lightly sped nor left a shade behind them
Till autumn's faded leaves and summer's flowers
Lie buried 'neath the icy chains that bind them.
We've waited long and, like a golden dream,
Fair Expectation, gilding all things bright,
Hath cast thro' months of toil her sunny beam
Upon the proud rejoicement of tonight.

For once a year fair Spring adorns the land,
(A sweeter guest ne'er passed the young year's portals);
And once a year from Winter's frosty hand
Leaps Christmas, making glad the hearts of mortals;
And once a year the Summer's placid gloss
Is rippled by the insects' drowsy humming;
And once a year the heart of Holy Cross
Beats high with pride and pleasure at thy coming.

We greet thee lovingly, for all things show
The kindly feelings to us that thou bearest.
We greet thee joyfully, for well we know
That in our happiness thou ever sharest.
We greet thee for the honour of this fête
(For months of classic toil a meet consoler)
And for the dignity that clothes thy state,
O Leader of the Children of Loyola!

XII.

LONELINESS.*

I have been happy for a score of years;
I have been filled with joy and freed from woe.
Now to my eyes springs up a fount of tears,
Now in my heart full sadly re-appears
The dreaded loneliness of long ago,
The same old loneliness that made tears flow
Long, long ago.

When birds cease singing and the sun has set
And soft winds sway the branches to and fro
And earth embraces with a vague regret
Day's parting charms, that linger even yet,
And twilight's shadows settle o'er us low,
It comes, the loneliness that made tears flow
Long, long ago.

"Better have loved and lost," the poet, sings,
"Than ne'er have loved at all." 'Tis even so;
For from true love a nobler manhood springs
And, tho' the soul beloved hath taken wings
And left us, sorely stricken 'neath the blow,
We ne'er forget that form we used to know
Long, long ago.

That well-loved form, whose every deed and
word
Were beautiful with virtue's lovely glow;
Whose simple trusting judgment never erred;
Whose firmly planted footsteps never stirred
From duty's steep, straight-forward path.
What tho'
It left us sad and lonely here below
Long years ago?

Its memory lingers yet. And it is sweet
To think of those we love. 'Tis sweet to grow
Content with loss, and feel our sorrows fleet
In silence from us, and to bravely greet
Death's steps, approaching steadily, tho' slow.—
How sweet a friend is Death! He seemed a foe
Some years ago.

Sweet is the sundown of our hopes and fears,
The twilight of our mingled joy and woe.
Sweet is the autumn of our faded years.
And sadly sweet the hour when re-appears
The loneliness we felt so long ago,
The same old loneliness that made tears flow
Long, long ago.

*"Loneliness" (see preceding page) with five other pieces of mine was printed by mistake in the "Poems and Prose Works" of the late lamented Rev. Richard J. McHugh (issued for subscribers in 1896 after Father McHugh's death by the John B. Clarke Co., of Manchester, N. H.) The pieces of mine included by mistake and thus credietd to my old friend Father McHugh, besides "Loneliness," are "The Tramp," "To My Canary," "Nationhood," "Day-Dream" and "The Light-House." (See "Poems of Prose-works of Rev. Richard J. McHugh, B. A., M. A.," pages 93 to 103),

XIII.

FOUR HYMNS TO SAINT ANNE.

(*From the French*).

1. MORNING STAR.
(*Etoile du Matin*).

(Refrain)—

Kind Saint Anne, protect thou me!
Guide my bark upon life's river!
Save me from the wreck forever!
Kind Saint Anne, I hope in thee!

When the storm-waves swelling high
Come to threaten my salvation,
Calm the tempest's fluctuation;
Change to blue the gloomy sky.

Shoals are hidden while the night
Throws its pitchy darkness o'er me;
Touch them, lay them bare before me,
O thou ever-shining light!

Yet if ever,—God forefend!—
Sin's foul shipwreck should undo me,
Cast the plank of Grace unto me;
Lead me onward to the end.

When from wind and cloud there start
Sudden dangers round me swarming,
Grant that fierce temptation's storming
May but purify my heart.

And when from this lower air
Death's resistless beck hath won me,
Morning-Star, still shine upon me!
Sweet Saint Anne, still list my prayer!

---

2. THE HOLY NAME, SAINT ANNE.

(*Le Nom de Sainte Anne*).

Saint Anne!—How that name revealeth
All our bright mem'ries of joy!
How soft on the ear it stealeth
In melody without alloy!
In our sadness and our sorrow
That holy name soothes care and strife.
From its tender grace we borrow
Peace for this stormy life.

Saint Anne!—Name whose potent sounding
Back to his home in the fire
Hurleth, all his trust confounding,
Foul Lucifer in hopeless ire:—
While life's shadows black impending
Oppress my soul with woe or shame,
May my tongue unto life's ending
Call upon thee, Sweet Name!

Saint Anne!—What a charm maternal
In that pure name doth abide,
Replete with God's grace supernal
Tho' dangers press on every side.—
When my soul, death's pangs defying,
Sweet Name, shall struggle to be free,
May my fond lips still in dying
Close while they murmur thee!

3. RECOURSE TO SAINT ANNE.

(*Recours à Sainte Anne*).

O gentle Mother
Before thee while we pray,
Thine and none other
The love we claim today.
Earth's dangers lie before us;
Vile Satan fain would lower us.
Watch ever o'er us
Till life hath passed away.

Mother most tender,
In all our griefs and fears
Be our defender
And guide us thro' our years.
The weight of their distresses
Thy children dear oppresses.
Grant thy caresses
To wipe away our tears.

God watches o'er us,
We're His in ev'ry part,
Pray to Him for us
And offer Him our heart.
To warm our tepid spirit
O let us but inherit
Thy priceless merit
Till hellish foes depart.

E'er humbly bowing
Upon thy strength we lean.
List to us vowing,
O Mother of our Queen,

With warm prayers to entreat thee,
With praises e'er to greet thee,
Till we shall meet thee
In heaven's realms serene.

---

4. HYMN TO SAINT ANNE.

(*Cantique* à *Sainte Anne*).

(Refrain)—

Kind Saint Anne, before thee kneeling,
While life's shadows round us fall,
To thy mother-heart appealing,
In our needs on thee we call.

Hail! Thou Mother of the Maiden
Who did bear our Saviour Lord!
Hymns with thy bright praises laden
We will sing in sweet accord.

Legends tell that Jesus rested
In His Childhood on thy knee
While the Virgin manifested
All her daughter-love for thee.

When death's angel came to woo thee,
Jesus stroked thy silvered hair,
Opened Limbo up unto thee
And prepared thy dwelling there.

Now to him who seeks thy favour,
Heaven's grace e'er floweth free;
For the power that Jesus gave her,
Mary giveth unto thee!

XIV.

ST. BERNARD'S MOTHER.

Ever faintly, faintly breathing,
Fading to her death,
Lieth holy Bernard's mother,
Sweet Elizabeth.
Round her couch with woeful faces
Each devoted son:
Guy and Gerard, Andrew, Nivard
And the favored one.

"Spouse!"—The knight, her noble husband,
Gentle draweth nigh.—
"Thou hast fought earth's battles. Henceforth
Fight for Him on high!—
Guy, my eldest, yield to heaven
All that hath enticed.—
Bernard, First-Born of my Spirit!
Lead them——unto Christ!"

So she fainteth, Bernard's mother,
Sweet Elizabeth,
Gasping with calm, whitened features,
Fainteth into death.
And they gaze upon her body
Motionless and still,
But unto her soul each answers:
"Pleasing God, I will!"

In the cloistered "beauteous valley,"
  In remote Clairvaux,
Six tall monks 'mid prayer and fasting
  Hie them to and fro
Under Prior Bernard, serving
  God with every breath.—
Rest her soul, their gentle mother,
  Sweet Elizabeth!

XV.

THE PAGAN PHILOSOPHER'S QUESTION.

O Past, forever gone!
How fair the fringe of thy departing dress
Receding, fading, growing less and less!
How sadly kind thy voice's dying notes
As down the years' dark avenue soft floats
Their lingering echo! How supremely sweet
The perfume left behind, as in retreat
Thou movest on and on.

O Love, forever fled,
Sweet fire of human hearts, that lights and warms
And moulds them all-defiant to life's storms!
Whence comes thy spark divine and whither goes
Its beaming radiance when no longer glows
Its light on earth? O does thy presence thrill
The dear departed? Art thou burning still
Amongst the silent dead?

O Life, that passest by,
What is thy spell, thy golden mystery?
Whence blows the wondrous air, the breath of thee,
Which makes us living clay? What potent force
Of nature thro' our burning veins doth course?
What undiscovered, mute electric flood
Doth vivify the channels of our blood
Until we gasp and die?

O Death! Thou comest fast!
Dark crowner of the combats that we wage,
Unmoved rewarder of our pilgrimage!
Thou comest fast, and dimly we behold
Thy form approaching with broad ample fold
Of blackest drapery. And thou dost hear
Each question that we ask; and full and clear
Wilt answer them at last.

XVI.

THE PAGAN PHILOSOPHER'S ANSWER

"'Cause of causes, pity me!', 'Causa, causarum, miserere mei!', was a favorite ejaculation of the pagan philosopher, Cicero" (old anecdote book).

'Twas night; for darkness filled the air
And life was stilled. He lay at rest
And thro' his spacious lattice-square
The sea-air poured upon his breast,
The fragant night-breath of the sea
That laps the shores of Italy.

'Twas night; for Christ had not been born
And earth was wrapped in that dense gloom
Which came before the radiant morn
Of faith. He lay within his room,
One of the few, whose mind, unblurred,
Had compassed all, nor longer erred;

One of the few, whose vision, healed
From error's blindness, clear did see
In brightest light, tho' unrevealed,
The oneness of the Deity.
He mused and fervent reasoning broke
Night's stillness and he softly spoke:

"It must be so. I can but see
The chain of Thy causality.
O Cause of causes, pity me!

"I grope in darkness, sad and slow;
I see Thy works where'er I go.
I worship Thee, but do not know.

"Yet why complain? Weak mortals we,
Who see, and know not why they see;
And shall we think to fathom Thee?

"In yonder blue each silv'ry star
Beams soft and sends his light afar.
What sage will tell me whence they are?

"Without my walls, beyond my land
The waves make music on the strand:
But why, I cannot understand.

"Then shall I hope to fathom Thee,
Thou Ruler of infinity?—
O Cause of causes, pity me!

"This earth, whose smallest charms entrance
My soul until my every glance
Speaks praise, could never spring from chance.

"A matchless skill hath formed it fair;
A boundless power made sea and air
And left its footprints everywhere.

"The ocean-tides that ebb and flow,
The seasons, as they come and go,
The day and night and all things show

"A wondrous method, fair, refined,
To every weakest creature kind;
And method ever springs from mind.

"Who made it? He who wears the crown
Among weak gods, whose head bows down
Abashed before proud Iuno's frown?

"The henpecked husband of the skies,
Whose marriage-woes make laughter rise
And sparkle from celestial eyes?

"No; since existence first began
It was a law in nature's plan;
Who has a wife, is but a man;

"And Jupiter is but the vain
Weak offspring of a poet's brain,
With human joys and human pain.

"Our gods but act what we rehearse.
And Saturn's spouse could never nurse
The builder of a universe.

"Our feeble gods are unto Thee
As dreams unto reality.
O Cause of causes, pity me!

"O art Thou kind, as well as great,
And may I hope this cheerless state
Will yield to some more happy fate?

"And that, when life hath passed away,
My soul, outliving night, may play
Within the sunlight of Thy day?

"Whate'er my future hath in store,
My present loves Thee more and more.
Thee only doth my soul adore.

"My will doth bow; my mind doth see;
My very being tend to Thee.
O Cause of causes, pity me!"

XVII.

OLD ST. MARY'S.

(St. Mary's, Fall River, Mass., now St. Mary's Cathedral, was just fifty years old when it was consecrated on Sept. 7th, 1901.

House of mercy, house of prayer,
House of worship and salvation!
Incense smoke and organ blare,
Floating in the holy air,
Symbolize thy Consecration.
Bloom of flowers, gleam of lights
Decorate the solemn rites;
Mitred pontiff, stolèd priest
Gather at the joyous feast;
While thy children's fond emotion
And thy people's glad devotion
Flood thee with a human ocean.

House of refuge, house of rest,
Shelter to the soul o'erweary,
Haven of the piercéd breast,
Sorrow-wounded, care-oppressed,
When life's day is dark and dreary!
Hearts bowed down with misery,
Drag their weight of woe to thee;
Spirits smitten 'neath the rod,
Fly to thee, oh! House of God!
And while earth's wild tumult varies,—
Time's caprices, life's vagaries,—
Calm thou standest, old St. Mary's.

Fifty years, in peace and war,
  Hast thou stood, "a thing of beauty,"
Thro' the wrongs our souls abhor
And the rights they battle for
  Pointing us the way of duty.
Fifty years within thy fane
Infant souls from Adam's stain
Have been cleansed; and fifty years
Penitential sighs and tears,
True confession, warm contrition
Have obtained in glad fruition
Absolution and remission.

Here the child-soul had its growth,
  Confirmation, First Communion.
Here did lovers, nothing loath,
Join their hands and plight their troth,
  One in sacramental union.
Here the sad procession marched
Thro' the long aisles Gothic-arched
When the death-cold corpse was borne
To the tomb, and they who mourn,
Prayed that to their dear one, shriven
From his sins, might soon be given
God's repose, the light of heaven.

Fifty years, thro' misery
  And thro' joy, would high and lowly
Bow them down in worship free
'Neath thy shrine, where dwelleth He
  Who is Holy, Holy, Holy;
Fifty years their grateful love

Hath been wafted far above
While the Sacrifice Divine
Of the mystic bread and wine
By God's priest was celebrated
Solemnly and angels, sated
With their bliss, attendant waited.

Now,—as when a postulant
  After months of earnest trial
Or a novice, ministrant
'Neath God's laws, 'mid solemn chant
  Speaks her vows of self-denial,—
Now, thou honoured Gothic pile,—
Pointed arch and pillared aisle,—
In all dignity and state
(Finished *thy* novitiate),
With they people's jubilation
Now advance to higher station!
Now receive thy Consecration!

Tabernacle, where doth reign
  Heaven's King in Real Presence!
Altar, where the Lord doth deign,
As He died for us in pain,
  So in love to take His pleasaunce!
Gothic vault of light subdued!
Storied windows glory-hued!
Depth of nave and breadth of choir!
Length of sky-line! Height of spire!
Old St. Mary's!—To approve thee
How doth God smile down above thee!—
And thy children,—how they love thee!

XVIII.

FAREWELL.

To Very Rev. Father Hogan, S. S., First President St. John's Seminary, Boston, 1888.

Dear Father Hogan, while night's shadows fall
Upon our Alma Mater's honoured walls,
While birds good-night to one another call
In yonder pines, and list each other's calls,
While nature's gentle breast is overflowing
With peace, the daylight gone, the twilight going,
One last time in this dear, familiar place
Where evening's shadows have so often found you,
One last time (for a transient summer's space)
You sit, with us your children all around you.

We meet to part; for when another day
Has risen from the fruitful eastern skies,
Its sad-winged hours shall bear you far away.
Yet Memory still, when lost unto our eyes,
Will hold you in unfaltering devotion.
And Fancy shall be with you on the ocean;
Shall follow where the waves toss wild and free;
Shall mark your heart leap forward to its sireland
When Neptune lowers his crest to let you see
The rising shores, far-off, of holy Ireland.

"Farewell—a word that must be and hath been
A sound which makes us linger—yet farewell!"
Thus spake the soul of Byron, and within
Our hearts tonight his language seems to dwell
Most fittingly, as in its proper dwelling.
What means Farewell? It means the bosom swelling
With hope and trust, with wish and earnest prayer
That God, Who guards His Own thro' joy and grieving,
Would deign to grant His all-benignant care
And love unto the dear one we are leaving.

And such our farewell. May the course you steer
Be tranquil, with serenest skies above!
May Ireland ope her arms to give you cheer
In all the fervour of her peerless love!
May sunny France, her pulse in rapture beating
Send forth to you her fondest, warmest greeting!
May God protect you! Till, when nature dons
New hues and puts her autumn robes upon her,
You stand once more within revered St. John's
For further years of usefulness and honour!

For further years, and labours which befit
Your lofty place, till length of days has crowned you
With virtues promised guerdon, and you sit
In heaven with your children all around you!
Dear Father Hogan, thus our thoughts tonight
Arise commingled in us, sad and bright,
At your departure, while from deep within
Our very hearts the parting doth outswell:
"Farewell—a word that must be and hath been
A sound which makes us linger—yet farewell!"

XIX.

AT CORPUS CHRISTI.

The sunlit, storied windows fling
  Their splendour on the Gothic nave.
The organ peals, the censers swing
  The lights burn high, the banners wave,
And frankincense and prayer arise
While Thou, oh! Lord of Paradise,
Art borne before our raptured eyes;—

Art borne about us, kneeling here
  In worship on this gladsome feast,
Raised high in reverent love and fear
  Before him by Thy white-haired priest
With children strewing flowers the whiles
The long procession grandly files
Adown and up the pillared aisles.

E'en thus of old from Galgal plain
  Thy Ark with seemly pomp and show
Was borne by Josue's priestly train
  About the walls of Jericho:—
Seven times in military rout
With trumpet blare and warlike shout
They compassed all the walls about.

Within was terror and dismay
  And rampant sin and shame and blight.
Without was courage for the fray
  And trust in Thy resistless might.—

Seven times about the guilty town
Thy Ark was borne; and at Thy frown
The walls of Jericho crashed down.

Oh! Lord, hurl down the walls of sin,
  The battlements of misery
And selfishness, that fence me in
  And bar my guilty soul from Thee!
Fight in me, till Thy foes depart.
Ope wide the gates, whose King Thou art,
And triumph in my conquered heart!

XX.

LIFE AND DEATH.

What, old Comrade, art thou sighing?
Wherefore sigh?
We're quite old enough for dying,
Thou and I.
While we sit each other eyeing
Younger hearts are madly vieing
For our place. And Time is flying.
Let him fly!

Each his turn. The days, retreating,
Pass to night.
And the changeful seasons, fleeting,
Take their flight.
And the winter clouds are sleeting
Out *their* lives. And flowers are meeting
Gloomy death with solemn greeting
In the light.

All the world is gone or going
To the tomb,
Death's full bins are overflowing
With its doom.
Death shall reap what life is sowing:
Age, its wisdom deep bestowing,
Happy youth, and beauty glowing
In its bloom.

Life is brief as infant's breathing;
Death is long.
Life is weak as sea-foam's seething;
Death is strong.

Life is dreary prose, unsheathing
All the ills of birth's bequeathing;
Death is verse, its flowerlets wreathing,
Death is song.

'Tis a garden with sweet, vernal
Blossoms rife,
Free from all earth's cares diurnal,
Free from strife.
'Tis a seed that hides the kernel
Of fair peace and joys supernal;
And it burgeoneth eternal
Into life.

Ah! We blunder, sadly sighing,
Thou and I,
That old Time forsooth is flying.
Let him fly!
To the soul on Christ relying
Life is sweet, but sweeter dying;
Faith *his* solace, when descrying
Death is nigh.

XXI.

FIDELITY.

When early twilight o'er us falls
In radiance calm and sweet,
Two grey hoods and two old shawls
Move down the village street;
With lengthy steps on left and right
In stately grace they stalk;
And I pause to greet them every night
As I take my evening walk.

Then from under the hoods of grey
Faces wrinkled and worn
Beam with smiles of a by-gone day,
And to my ears are borne
Accents in a piping tone
That once was soft and sweet;
And the aged forms move slowly on
Along the village street.

Once when the crescent moon shone bright,
Queen of the evening sky,
I met them 'neath its silv'ry light
Where calmly sleeping lie
The dead. And standing on the sward
Within that lonely vale,
With unpremeditated word
They told their simple tale.

"The selfsame hour beheld our birth
And we were bred together
And hand in hand thro' grief and mirth,
Thro' fair and cloudy weather,

Thro' all the shadows of our way,
Thro' all its joy and sorrow
We've walked, nor feared the present day
Nor worried for the morrow.

"Why come we here? Twin sisters we
And Oh! we love each other!
But dear to her and dear to me
The memory of our mother!
At twilight's hour one autumn day,—
'Twas thirty years ago,—
Her spirit fled its house of clay.
Her bones rest here below.

"And at her grave on bended knee
Our prayers we send on high
That light perpetual may be
Her lot beyond the sky.
And e'er for thirty weary years
When twilight dims the day
We freshen with our heart-sprung tears
The grass above her clay.

"For when the sun makes all things bright,
Hope shineth pure and fair;
And 'neath the gloomy wings of night
Are gathered dark despair
And all the foul, unshapely sins;—
But memory hath full power
When toil has ceased and rest begins
At twilight's holy hour."

XXII.

BEAUTY IN ALL THINGS.

(Nocturne).

From the ruined castle's walls
  Downward slopes the grassy hill.
    At its base the river flows
    Sweetly singing as it goes
Till into the sea it falls.
Here nor life nor human breath;
  All the air is hushed and still.
    Truly Nature's self might seem
    In a sleep without a dream,
In the very sleep of death.

But at mignight (thrice a year)
  Whilst the hill is clothed in storm,
    From the deepest gloom of night
    Boometh thunder, flasheth light;
And the light endureth clear.
'Tis a wondrous, lasting beam
  And it moulds itself to form
    Superhuman, ravishing,
    Fairer than the fairest thing
Poet's soul did ever dream!

O the spot were hard to seek
  But if erring mortal ken
    Might avail to compass there,
    You would see the vision fair;
You would hear the vision speak:

"I am Beauty" (sayeth he)
"And before the birth of men
I was born, and when the last
Of the race of men has passed,
Still in Vision I will be.

"I was on the grassy hill
E'er the castle crowned its height,
When the pines each other wooed
Lovers in the solitude
And the dryads had their will.
I was present when outpoured
Gentle dame and lordly knight
From the castle's portals fair
To the chase, or thro' the air
On its prey the falcon soared.

"I am present even yet
In the ruins crumbling walls
While the rushing storms downpour
And the booming thunders roar
And the winds its arches fret.
I am Beauty, and I play
Over bridal-wreaths and palls.
Thou shalt see me in the bloom
Of the flowers, and in the tomb
Of thy race, and in decay!"

XXIII.

DAY-DREAM.

(BY AN EXILE OF ERIN.)

(See Note to "Loneliness.")

Stony the road was and cheerless the weather;
Bleak clouds hung o'er us and winter winds wailed;
Two of us, trudging the mountain together,
Safe in our friendship, tho' other things failed.
"Courage!", Franz cried; "tho' so high we ne'er come, it
Proves we love duty, fear duty, and from it
Would not depart, tho' we ne'er reach the summit;
Would not depart tho' we sleep in the snow!"
Courage I took, and we tramped on together,
Smiled at the windstorm and sneered at the weather,
Called it a ghost with less weight than a feather
Striving to fright us and keep us below.
Ah! I loved Franz for his spirit did cheer me,
Held me from weakness and faint-hearted ills.
Sweet was the valley that nestled so near me
Over the hills!

Years have sped on, and my spirit is fainter;
Grief-clouds have met me and drenched me with woe;
Memory still, like a merciless painter,
Pictures my sorrows wherever I go;
Sorrows that mar the content of the present,
Lead me to envy the lot of the peasant,
Bid me to every sad query say yes, and
Murmur fore'er at my pitiful fate.
So human life were a steep, rugged mountain
Here and there softened by streamlet or fountain,
Every slow step towards a grand total counting
Where one's best efforts might be but too late.
O for the rest that is promised unto us!
O for eternity's gladness, that fills!
O for the glories of heavens, which woo us
Over the hills!

Yet we must stay. We must dwell on this planet
Till we are called to our birthright above.
Beautiful Earth! We must love it, and can it
Pay us with coldness instead of with love?
No! We're a nation; we're millions of brothers
Neighbors, and sisters, and fathers and mothers,
Friends of our country, and just men, and others,
Striving to make her a land of the free!
"Erin" her name and a martyr's her features.

Stranger, if ever their beauty should meet
yours,
Sweeter by far than fair earth's other creatures
Would they shine to you as they shine to
me!
Upward e'er striving,—her story will teach
it,—
Hers for long ages th' endeavour that
thrills.
Sweet will her freedom be when she shall
reach it
Over the hills!

XXIV.

FOURTH OF JULY IN TYROL.

(1884, Innsbruck University).

A summer day, a day of golden weather
And azure skies and zephyrs soft and bland;
Some twenty students gathered here together
Who hail Columbia as their motherland.
Young ardour vapours like the spray of fountains
While thro' the meadows merry voices call
And from yon haughty old Tyrolean mountains
Come, echoed back, the war-cries of base-ball!

And then the banquet when the game is ended,—
'Tis Independence Day,—in fair Tyrol,—
The toasts, the speeches, the young voices blended
In patriotic chorus o'er the bowl.
And where the Hapsburg eagles haunt their eyrie,
The Stars and Stripes are floating in the sun!
And where Andréas Hofer kept him wary,
How grandly rings the name of Washington!

Ah! Love of Country! Thou art shining brightest
When blood outpours from hearts that burn with thee.
In weariness and hardships, thou delightest
The exile forced from tyrant's wrath to flee.
At home, abroad, alike in prince and peasant
Thou flourishest, thou growest more and more.
And truly too and warmly art thou present
With *willing* exiles from their native shore.

XXV.

THE LIGHT-HOUSE.

(See Note to "Loneliness.")

Where scraggy rocks lie hidden deep
  Beneath the salt-sea spray,
Where mermen joyous revels keep
When wind and wave are hushed to sleep
  Like children tired from play,
Where strong-winded birds float wild and free
  Above the shoaly strands,
One-half in air, one-half in sea
    The light-house stands.

And when erect he meets my sight
  Above the white-capped wave
And when I see his rugged might
Forever battling for the right,
  Fore'er intent to save
The luckless sailor wandering
  The trackless waste alone,
I cannot deem him but a thing
    Of brick and stone.

So when the sun illumes the sky
  And gilds the heaving main,
In massive grandeur towering high
He seems unto my fancy's eye
  A knight of Neptune's train

Who seeks the realms of light and air,
An exile from below,
For countless years condemned to bear
His weight of woe.

But when night broods upon the sea
And sombrous vapours creep
Athwart the stars, and winds are free
To fret the waves, he seems to me
The watchman of the deep;
And cheerly thro' the gloom he glows,
A cyclops in his might,
Whose bulky forehead proudly shows
One eye of light.

XXVI.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE.

"For the old year lies adying" (Tennyson).

New-Year's Eve! and from the welkin
Brightly shine the lamps of night.
Chaste and cold the moon is beaming,
Dazzling white the snow is gleaming
With her sheeny, pallid light.
And the mighty winds are sighing,
Chanting low a monarch's knell,
For "the Old Year lies adying."—
Old Year, Old Year, fare-thee-well!

New-Year's Eve! and in the moonlight
Spectres flitter to and fro!
For his dissolution longing
Ghosts of by-gone Years are thronging
Round their brother, lying low.
Old Year, where no evils seek it
May thy spirit happy dwell!
Softly, tenderly we speak it:
Old Year, Old Year, fare-thee-well!

New-Year's Eve! The bells are pealing
And they chime not moan nor groan.
Happy faces, merry voices
Tell the skies that earth rejoices,
For a new king mounts his throne.
Let them hail him e'er so gladly;
Let the bells their anthems swell;
I at least will murmur sadly:
Old Year, Old Year, fare-thee-well!

XXVII.

MEMORIAL DAY.

(Philomathic Club, Holy Cross College, 1880.)

When each hill and grove is ringing with the songster's magic lay,
When the perfume-laden breezes speak the presence of bright May,
When the streamlets, gently rippling, ever ever onward run,
From his bed in eastern ocean upward leaps the mighty sun.

And his rays are brightly gilding all the city's glittering towers,
Flashing o'er her sparkling waters, playing 'mid her scented flowers.
Why is hushed the din of labour? Whither traffic's turmoil fled?
Look! A Nation fondly weeping o'er a Nation's soldier-dead.

When the flowers of spring were blooming in the ne'er-forgotten past,
On a land that calmly rested fiercely rang the trumpet's blast.
And their faces paled, who heard it, and their pulses throbbed in awe,
For the reign of peace was broken by the iron hand of war.

Yet they gathered bravely, truly; deemed him
base who dared to lag
When the clouds of dark Disunion lowered
upon his country's flag;
Bade farewell to friend and kindred; blessed
the spots where hearth-fires burned;
Marched to meet their country's foes. And
some, alas! have ne'er returned.

In the grassy, silent churchyard, where the
willows meet the sky,
Calmly resting from their labours side by side
the warriors lie.
And the breezes moan above them and the
clouds of heaven weep
And the grave-stones, pointing upward, stand
like sentries o'er their sleep.

With the Nation's colors streaming, while the
echoing cannon boom,
Ye, who love the soldier's glory, decorate the
soldier's tomb.
Chant the solemn Miserere. With the prayer
the spirit craves,
With the tear that mourns their parting, strew
the flowers upon their graves;
They shall wither in the sunlight e'er another
day has sped;
But the glory of the sleepers shall not mingle
with the dead.

Philomathic, Philomathic, in the battlefield
of life
May thy sons be ever numbered 'mid the
heroes of the strife!
Calm and fearless e'er advancing thro' the
dangers of their way,
May their noble deeds be worthy of a bright
Memorial Day!
Philomathic, Philomathic, may thy joys be
pure and bright
As that sunset! And upon thee may mis-
fortunes fall as light
As the shades of night are falling o'er the
sunshine of the day
While yon rooks are softly calling from their
dwellings far away!

XXVIII.

NATIONHOOD.

(BY AN EXILE OF ERIN).

(See Note to Loneliness.)

In timeworn canvas on my study wall
A lovely maiden's painted form is standing.
About her neck soft auburn ringlets fall
To shade her features, gentle yet commanding,
And on her queenly head, with jewels bright
A silvery crown is flashing cheerful light,
E'en as the moon when thro' the summer night
She calmly beams, the fleecy clouds disbanding.

No scroll reveals the ancient painter's name
Nor has he named his work. But to my seeming
His hand must be not all unknown to fame,
So fine the form upon that canvas gleaming,
The sweetly tender face so kind and good!
I named her "Erin in her nationhood"
While in the light of long ago I stood
Before the splendour of her beauty dreaming.

And "Erin in her nationhood" still rings
Thro' all my soul whene'er with face uplifted
I gaze upon the canvas, and it brings
Unto my mind her glories that have drifted
Into the past: her saints of other days;
Her scholars, whose bright radiance pierced the haze
Of Europe's ignorance; her bards, whose lays
Still haunt this world-stage whence their scenes are shifted.

How more than sweet a word is "nationhood"
And 'neath its sound how full a meaning lieth!
For its fair sake the wise, the brave, the good
Have dying won the fame that never dieth
And passed to glorious rest. For it men die
E'en now, and ever shall till from on high
The angel's trumpet soundeth thro' the sky
And from its myriad graves mankind replieth.

While in a country nationhood remains
To shed its hallowed radiance upon her,—
Tho' writhing 'neath the weight of foreign chains
And fainter waning day by day and wanner,—
She stands, a captive maiden, sore oppressed
By countless ills, yet in her virtue blessed
And guarding still within her spotless breast
The priceless treasure of her virgin honour.

And such art thou, my country, whom I see
With fancy's eye in yonder timeworn painting!
Oppression's blight hath long o'ershadowed thee
With bonds and stripes thy free-born beauty tainting.
Thy lifelong agony no respite knows,
Thy very lifeblood slowly from thee flows
Till, crushed and bruised beneath its bitter woes,
Thy tender, loving heart is nigh to fainting.

Yet still thou livest; still thro' every vein
Bright nationhood its balmy flood is pouring;
And soon will Freedom wipe away the stain
Of slavery, thy long-lost peace restoring;
For Freedom's self will hear a nation's cries
And come to thee and dry thy streaming eyes
And on proud wings thy genius shall arise
Above the very stars, towards heaven soaring.

XXIX.

AT SEVENTY–FOUR.

Birth-Day Greeting to a Lady of That Age.

I am wondering tonight, while my thoughts wander free
O'er this life's stormy ocean from shore to shore,
Just what sort of a personage I shall be
If I ever reach seventy-four!

And my mind halts uneasy 'twixt fear and hope,
As the twilight hangs doubting 'twixt night and day.
'Twere a long road to travel, nor easy to cope
With the dangers that lie in the way.

Yet the pathway had blossomed with pleasures refined
Tho' the labours of centuries moistened my brow,
Were I happy and healthy in body and mind
At the close of my journey, as thou!

XXX.

GARFIELD.

(Elberon, 1881.)

I'd love to name him "great" and "grand";
But tho' 'twere done in sooth
By every rhymer in the land,
I needs must speak the truth;
So here I sing but what I know
Of him who now is lying low.

In peace his life was kind and fair,
Untarnished by a crime;
And tho' his path was full of care
Amid the sands of time,
He lived among his fellow-men
An honest, guileless citizen.

Then in the flash of swords and guns
He shone out clear and bright,
Not least among the mighty ones
That battled for the right;
Yet few the laurels given by fame
To deck the glory of his name.

His nation called. He could but hear
Her mandate and obey.
Then thousands hastened to revere
The magic of his sway.
Yet, tho' he wisely ruled and well,
For name and fame too soon he fell.

Then wherefore call him "great" and "grand"
  Now he has reached the goal?
No deed of might has left his hand;
  No genius fired his soul;
No conquered world, no nation freed,
Can claim for him the hero's meed.

No; rather, since his course is run,
  This simple legend tell
Upon his tomb: "Here lieth one
  Who did his duty well."
And bear his corse in grandeur dressed
Unto its place; and let him rest.

XXXI.

THE ROSE OF FRIENDSHIP.

While the soil is fresh and fertile,
E'er the spring of life depart,
Let me plant the rose of friendship
In the garden of your heart.

May it flourish thro' the springtime,
Thro' the summer and the fall!
And when hoar-frost chills the flowerlets
And bleak winter withers all,

(While good angels stand beside you
Driving evil ones apart,)
May fair friendship's flower still flourish
In the garden of your heart!

XXXII.

TO A COLLEGE FRIEND'S MOTHER.

(*By Request.*)

Thy form was ne'er beheld by me,
And yet, whate'er befall,
I know I'll ever think of thee
As one whom I may call
A friend. I paint thee in my mind,—
As in my mind I may,—
A woman, like all women, kind
And, like all young ones, gay;
Nor have I fear that thou'lt resent
This bit of rhyme in kindness to thee meant.

Thy features fair I may but guess.
Perchance 'twill e'er be so.
Perchance my hand may never press
Thy friendly hand below.
Yet tho' on earth we never meet,
Our minds, from where they dwell,
May still partake communion sweet
And wish each other well.
So in thy kindness often send
A thought from out life's battle to—Thy Friend.

XXXIII.

ON A FLY-LEAF.

Like a marble block, uncarved and bare,
Or a drift of snow in the wint'ry air
It lay before me pure and fair,
  This virgin page in its stainless white.
And I thought: "Were it sager to leave it so
Unmarred and unstained in its spotless glow,
  Or to take up my pen, and write?"

I am writing now; the ink-strokes crawl
Across the page, and the long lines fall
From side to side and over all,
  As soldiers move when a field is fought.
Yet while the ranks and files march by,
I question: "Which more charms the eye:
  A stainless page, or a useless thought?"

XXXIV.

IN THE DORMITORY.

Holy Cross, 1882.)

The dormitory's weak, unsteady light
Fought faintly with the gloomy shades of night.
Without, the stars were hidden, all save one
That near the east horizon brightly shone.
Within my bed at softest ease I lay
And thought of every action of the day
And thanked my stars I had no cause to weep
And courted for my comfort gentle Sleep.
And soon he came. I saw my comrades, beds
Around me, with their spotless, snowy spreads,
Like gravestones in the gas-jets' feeble light.
I saw the noiseless black-robed prefect stalk
From end to end upon his lonely walk
A veritable spirit of the night.
I heard some weary dreamer's gentle snore
And then I sank to sleep and heard no more.,
No; but I dreamed.

Methought that years had flown
And that, an old man, in the world alone,
From home returned once more, I craved to see
The Alma Mater so beloved by me.
All things were strange, and new I gazed upon.

That dear old Class of 'Eighty-Three was
gone.
New faces met my eye in each dear spot.
New students sore bemoaned the "Lines"
they got.
New prefects told again the same old story
And cast their victims into "purgatory"

I mounted to the place where erst we slept,
And in my happiness I almost wept
As ancient memories of boyhood's glee
Thronged slow, yet sweet and surely, back
to me.
I found at length my well-remembered bed
And threw myself upon it. And I said:
"Is it the same old bed I loved so well?"

Then Mr. C–s–y, as he rang the bell,
Replied: "It surely is. But let that pass.
Just tumble quickly out, and dress for Mass!"

XXXV.

THE TRAMP.

(See Note to "Loneliness.")

He sits on yonder painted bench that overlooks the smiling sea.
His clothes are tattered, and his shoes are well worn-out. But what cares he?
While grass is green and skies are blue, while winds are sweet, and birds explore
The unseen depths of atmosphere, he's happy. Kings can be no more.

On velvet cushions ill at ease, with wrinkled brow and haggard eye,
Admired by half his foolish town, the stolid millionaire rides by;
And while he ponders o'er the wealth whose cares his wearied features stamp
He murmurs: "O that I might own the liberty of yonder tramp!"

XXXVI.

TO MY CANARY.

(See Note to "Loneliness.")

Canary, ever singing
Songs of thy home within the southern sea,
Thy voice is e'er outringing
Sweet notes of hope and comfort unto me.
What tho' thou ne'er wast free?
What tho' thy little will did ne'er rejoice
In godlike liberty,
Our thrice-ennobling attribute of choice?
Thine is thy care-free life, and thine thy silv'ry voice.

Hast thou no winged ambition
To sing for more discerning ears than mine?
Or deemst thou it elysian
Within so mean a theatre to shine?
No voice to vie with thine
Save the hoarse alto of my violin;
No laurels to entwine
Thy brow. But only bright days that have been
And sunshine fair without, and sweet content within.

No doubt in days more sunny
Thy race was happier: in the years gone by
When neither love nor money
Would steal thy liberty or make thee sigh
Within yon cage; when I

Was formless, uncreated, yet to rise
From nothingness; and thy
Forefathers, basking 'neath cerulean skies,
Sang sweetest songs for mine in peerless
Paradise.

It may be thou dost borrow
Delights from woe, imprisoned in this place.
It may be even sorrow
That yields thy artless melody its grace,
Poor Tasso of thy race,
Whose sunny blood no frosts can e'er congeal!
Condemned fore'er to trace
Gay scenes thou canst not gaze on, and reveal
Sweet sounds thou dost not hear, bright joys
thou canst not feel!

Yet cheer thee, for there lingers
This consolation in thy gloomy state:
That there are other singers
Who share with thee thy melancholy fate
And, prisoned here, await
The gladsome day whose dawn shall set them
free,
And yearn to satiate
Their longings, and with all humility
Pray for that sweet content heaven granteth
unto thee.

XXXVII.

TO WALTER.

(On His First Birthday.)

Merry Christmas, little stranger
Just arrived from fairyland!
Priceless gift from Santa Claus,
Governed by his fairy-laws.
From a land of ceaseless joy
Where nor woe nor cares annoy
Angels brought thee, hand in hand,
To these realms of doubt and danger.

Bright complexion; features rounded;
Height twelve inches; weight two stone;
Minus hair; with eyes of light
Brilliant as the stars of night;
Voice soft alto, prattling yet
Fairy-words you'll soon forget:—
That is your description, done
Just as in a dream I found it.

Little eyes, wide-oped in wonder
At this funny, funny earth,
May you ne'er be dimmed with tears
Thro' a life of happy years!
Little hands, too fair to soil,
May you ne'er be rough with toil
From the moment of your birth
Till you reach that heaven yonder.

Little feet, that must be learning
Soon to tread earth's weary ways,
Thro' life's journey may you pass
Gently as o'er meadow grass,
Never swerving with your load
From fair duty's upward road!
So will you deserve all praise,
Right embracing, wrong things spurning.

Baby, may you never falter
In the path our laws allow
Till you reach the happy goal
Where all joy awaits the soul
That has done what it should do!
This is what I wish to you,
Even as I wish you now
Merry Christmas, little Walter!

XXXVIII.

BASE-BALL SONG.

(Holy Cross, 1882.)

When the earth is fresh and fair
With the promise of the spring,
When upon the balmy air
All the flowers their perfume fling,
When the grass is growing green
And the skies are blue and soft,
When the "buttercup and bean"
Drop their clay and spring aloft,
Then our life is never flat;
Strive we then to win renown
While we swing the willow-bat
Up and down, up and down.
Oh! within this life so fleeting
Whatsoever grief befall,
Hearts are ever joyous beating
Where exists a bat and ball.

Tho' you're noted for your skill
In the tossing of the ball,
Yet your limbs must practice still
Lest their soaring pride downfall.
Inert virtue, laid away,
Groweth stagnant in the air;
Virtue practised day by day
Ever shineth pure and fair.
And the blood will pitter-pat
Whether features smile or frown

When you swing the willow bat
  Up and down, up and down.
And within your life so fleeting
  Whatsoever grief befall
Hearts will e'er be joyous beating
  When you take the bat and ball.

One more holiday has fled
  With its sunny mirth and glee,
Golden moments lightly sped
  To the sea, Eternity.
Floating on life's changing stream,
  Chequered hours of toil and play
Soon will bring the amber gleam
  Of another holiday.
Let your soul rejoice thereat,
  Tho' your sun-burned skin turn brown
While you swing the willow bat
  Up and down, up and down.
For within your life so fleeting
  Whatsoever grief befall,
Hearts will e'er be joyous beating
  When you take the bat and ball.

Pull together, loyal hearts!
  Soon will come the time for rest.
Happy fortune ne'er departs
  From the men that do their best.
Spring will nurse the tender shoots
  Till they're strong; and some day we
Yet may don those purple suits
  With the letters, H. C. C.!

Carpe diem!—Verbum sat.!
Play the game from toe to crown
While you swing the willow bat
Up and down, up and down.
Oh! Within this life so fleeting
Whatsoever grief befall,
Hearts are ever joyous beating
Where exists a bat and ball!

XXXIX.

THE MELODIES OF IRELAND.

(Being the plaint of an aged exile.)

The swash of billows breaking on the shore,
The wind's weird sighing, and the songs of birds,
The raindrop's pattering, and the rushing roar
Of mountain torrents,—poems without words,—
All these in turn contribute to the grand,
Bright, peerless music of my native land.
Soft as the gushing murmur of the sea,
Warm as the summer raindrop's pattering,
Sweet as the birds that beautify the spring
With nature's symphonies celestial, free
As autumn's breezes playing in the trees,
Are Ireland's soul-delighting melodies.

And in heroic times they had their birth
When naught save sordid dross was bought and sold,
When Music reigned, a goddess, on the earth
And Merit held a higher rank than Gold.
The bard, enthronéd in the banquet hall,
Was next the person of the king, and all
Did honour to him. When he struck the strings,
A breathless stillness fell upon the crowd

Till, breaking thro' the silence, sweet and loud
His voice soared upwards, as his soul took wings.
The monarch's smile, the plaudits of the throng,
Paid homage to the singer and the song.

Thus honoured in our isle, the goddess dwelt
Long with us, and the magic of her sway
Made bright life's gloomy shadows, till men felt
Their joys increase, their sorrows fleet away;
While she, content to reach so bright a goal,
Gave to fair Eire the fullness of her soul.
And when the stranger came to Erin's shore
And marred her beauties with oppression's blight
And changed her sunbright day to gloomy night,
Sweet Music only loved her more and more,
Too grateful for the kindness of the past
To leave her when her skies were overcast.

The glories of our land have passed away;
Our heroes all have died the caitiff's death;
Our saints have ever prayed, as still they pray,
For liberty; our children draw their breath
From foreign atmospheres; our very tongue,
The grand old Gaelic, fadeth from among
The speeches of the living; we are wrecked

Upon the shores of Time, and other hands
Have snatched our hoarded treasures from the sands
And with our laurels other brows are decked.
But Time's remorseless gulf shall never seize
The glory of our Irish melodies.

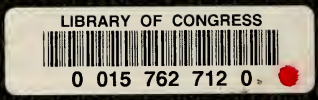
The melodies of Ireland, how they roll
Spontaneous, yet unexcelled in art,
To bind in flowery chains the raptured soul
And move to fire or tears the stormy heart,
Enslaving in their thraldom sweet and pure
The ear of Byron and the pen of Moore!
E'en as in olden days when Lucan scanned
The flag of France above his head unfurled
And cried: "We'll fight the battles of the world,
Give us the music of our own dear land!"
Such still the spell, the magic power to please
That lurks in Ireland's witching melodies.

I've heard them in the trebly crowded hall
When Ireland's sons have met for Ireland's cause
And marked th' enchantment stealing over all,
Our souls too full to yield the due applause,
Till tears of joy and hope have dimmed the eye
And from the breast escaped the ready sigh.
I've heard them ringing in the crowded street
Where thousands marched thro' thousands, and the dead

Were almost wakened by the martial tread
Above them of a myriad hastening feet;
And all my soul has kindled into light
And maddened with fierce yearning for the fight.

The melodies of Ireland! Once again,
O grant it, heaven, 'ere my race is run
And I have left the busy haunts of men
And rest where never shines the golden sun,
May my ears hear them! Not where tearful bands
Of exiles seek new homes in foreign lands,
Nor in that Ireland which oppressions stain;
But in the strong, free Ireland, yet unborn,
Whose light shall break upon us like the morn
Or like her own bright Sunburst after rain,
And teach unto the nations from her sod
The power and mercy of the nations' God!

THE END.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